

# **Special Advisor for Digital Media**

## **GS-1001-11**

### **Introduction**

The position is located in the Office of Public Affairs (OPA), in the Office of the Administrator. The Special Advisor for Digital Media assists OPA's Associate Administrator (AA), Deputy Associate Administrator (DAA), and other senior officials on media relations and other communications aspects of the Agency's programs and activities.

The proposed incumbent of the position, requested for Schedule C, exception will not be able to adequately perform their duties without being privy to the political, personal, and management philosophies of the Associate Administrator for Public Affairs. A confidential relationship of a Schedule C nature is imperative since the incumbent will speak for the Associate Administrator for Public Affairs and, as such, will be expected to reflect their supervisor's philosophies in conversations with leading figures of the government, business and other groups. The incumbent will also be obliged to present the views of the Associate Administrator for Public Affairs in correspondence and other communications with agency managers and program officials.

### **Major Duties and Responsibilities**

1. Evaluates, analyzes and initiates actions for planning, managing, and directing a comprehensive program to support complex communications, education, and media relations tasks that cross program offices, Federal agencies, regional, and state boundaries, as well as communicating EPA's policies to the public.
2. Uses social media to disseminate written information about EPA programs. Serves as a liaison to EPA managers to remain aware of on-going activities or proposed actions that require dissemination of information on EPA policies or actions. Develops campaigns to target articles or stories to specific audiences. Creates and posts feature stories, announcements, reports, and audience-specific descriptions of agency policies, programs and events using social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter. Tailors written products for specific audiences with differing levels of interest and understanding of technically complex and/or scientific subject matter.
3. Establishes and maintains effective relationships with media representatives and specialized groups to disseminate information that will enhance public knowledge and understanding of EPA policies and programs. Responds to inquiries and ensures that information provided is accurate, timely, relevant, appropriate, and supportive of the Agency's overall policy and communication objectives. Written products articulate, interpret, and explain moderately complex and technical environmental policies and programs. Anticipate public reaction and recommend specific courses of action to minimize adverse impact that could impede achievement of environmental activities and goals. Brief media representatives on agency's programs and activities and their impact on various public and private activities. Organize and coordinate interviews with senior management and oversee arrangements. Alert managers and

program staff of potential press events, press conferences, etc.

4. Evaluate the effectiveness of communication plans in furthering EPA goals. Analyze public reaction to EPA environmental activities and actions, evaluate the effectiveness of communication channels and tools used to disseminate information, and recommend different or revised approaches to more effectively educate various audiences about environmental programs. Provide advice to program managers and technical staff on methods for encouraging public participation. Ensure future communication plans integrate or address diverse audience opinion to establish public trust and maintain mutual understanding with various agency stakeholders.
5. Incumbent prepares video releases and other informational material to be used on different media platforms. Interprets agency policy in terms of established objectives, determining the approach to be taken, and the methods and techniques to be employed. Keeps the supervisor informed of progress, potential controversies, or wide-ranging implications.
6. Incumbent is responsible for planning, organizing, and carrying out program assignments to maintain, improve or create systems and programs directly related to the activities and events associated with the Press. Applies practical knowledge and skills to identify new methods, approaches, or procedures to eliminate and avoid all negative concerns, issues, and/or perspectives regarding the operations of staff throughout the Office. Works closely with senior staff members to ensure changes and set timeframes are feasible, effective, and timely. Outcomes are expected to create immediate results and have long-term impact.
7. Analyzes public reaction to activities of the Agency through local press comments and by means of discussion with representatives of local media and organized groups and reports findings and provides conclusions to program officials and their supervisor.
8. Prepares news releases and other informational material based. Uses judgment in applying guidelines and making interpretations regarding the handling of media activities with program managers, developing information materials to reach specialized audiences, and responding quickly to media inquiries concerning agency environmental activities or programs.
9. Performs other related duties as assigned.

### **Factor Level Descriptions**

#### **Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position**

#### **Level 1-7 (1250 Points)**

Knowledge of the principles, practices, techniques and methods of communication, and skill in applying this knowledge to develop written information materials on complex environmental programs and activities to generally responsive groups or individuals through a wide variety of media.

Knowledge and skill in applying analytical and evaluative methods and techniques to a wide variety of issues sufficient to plan, organize, and carry-out program assignments to maintain, improve or create systems and programs directly related to the activities and events associated with the Office.

Knowledge and skill for developing written materials such as internet articles, social media posts, press releases, news stories, feature stories, fact sheets, television spots, etc. that effectively transmit information about complex environmental programs, activities and functions, and increase communication with the Agency's various publics.

Extensive knowledge and understanding of administrative principles, practices, methods and techniques, and skill in integrating management services and program support with the general management of an organization to support OPA and the AA.

Skill in developing and maintaining effective relationships with media representatives, agency managers, and program staff to enhance intercommunication between EPA and its audiences using various types of media.

Keeps informed of the philosophies, convictions and special interests of the AA. Keeps abreast of the major programs and policies of the Agency that are legislative in nature and are of interest and concern to various stakeholders.

Skill in developing and maintaining effective relationships with media representatives, agency managers, and program staff to effectively disseminate EPA policies and program information to diverse audiences using various types of media.

Knowledge and skill for analyzing media and public perceptions, and the overall effectiveness of communication plans in reaching targeted audiences; communicating important information on key agency programs and activities and recommending changes to future materials that will improve the public affairs program overall.

Knowledge of EPA regulations and programs to anticipate controversial issues and recommend specific courses of action to minimize adverse impact that could impede achievement of environmental activities and goals.

Ability to develop procedures for the conduct of administrative support functions for management as well as resolution of the difficult every-day problems encountered in the organization serviced.

## **Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls**

### **Level 2-4 (450 points)**

Reports to the Associate Administrator for Public Affairs. The supervisor determines the overall objectives and resources available for the position's assignment. However, specific activities may stem from the position's contacts with program managers, although final clearance of such requests is approved by the supervisor. The Special Advisor and supervisor jointly develop deadlines, projects and nature of the planned assignments.

The Special Advisor is responsible for planning and carrying out the project or assignment including resolving most problems, coordinating the work with others, interpreting policy in terms of established objectives, determining approach to be taken, and the methods and techniques to be employed. They keep the supervisor informed of progress, potential controversies, or wide-ranging implications.

Completed work is reviewed in terms of satisfying expected results of projects or assignments, responsiveness, and conformance with agency policy. Completed work may also be subject to clearance procedures from higher levels in the Agency.

### **Factor 3 - Guidelines**

### **Level 3-3 (275 points)**

Guidelines, which include agency policy statements and precedents, apply to some aspects of problems encountered, but most assignments involve unique facts or aspects for which no clear-cut precedents are appropriate, or guidelines are so broad that various interpretations are possible. The position is required to use judgment in applying guidelines and making interpretations regarding the handling of agency activities with program officials, developing information materials to reach specialized audiences, and responding quickly to media inquiries concerning agency environmental activities or programs.

### **Factors 4 - Complexity**

### **Level 4-4 (225 points)**

The work requires application of advanced communication and analytical practices, methods and techniques to the solution of complex problems such as developing and presenting informational material to achieve understanding of various points of view or concepts from publics with varying levels of understanding and different interests and perspectives on the subjects; employing a number of information gathering techniques in collecting and analyzing public reaction to information programs; and developing recommendations for management in improving the Agency's communication with the general public and specialized groups.

Decisions regarding what needs to be done are based upon analysis of the need for modifying standard communication practices and approaches such as analyzing reaction to information programs from a variety of groups having different interests and goals from the Agency; determining the feasibility of using various information gathering techniques in obtaining reaction from agency publics; and evaluating the effect of various information program approaches to the development of communication interchanges with agency publics.

The work requires making decisions on which of a variety of oral and written communication methods and approaches to employ in presenting and explaining programs and policies in a logical and clarifying manner, in a structured setting, in achieving understanding from the Agency's publics, some with differing interests, on the programs or policies advocated by the Agency.

### **Factor 5 - Scope and Effect**

### **Level 5-3 (150 points)**

The purpose of the work is to convey information of a recurring nature on environmental programs and policies to the public and specific groups. This is accomplished by responding to questions asked by the media or specific groups on standard agency policies, and participating in the development of communication plans and identification of communication channels (newspapers, radio, television, internet, social media, etc.) to reach specific audiences with varying levels of understanding on subjects.

The work contributes to the achievement of environmental program objectives by improving communication between EPA and the various publics affected by its programs or policies.

### **Factors 6/7 - Personal Contacts/Purpose of Contacts**

### **Levels 3b (110 points)**

Personal contacts include employees or senior management in the same agency but outside the

immediate organization, or with specialized groups or individuals from outside EPA where contact is not routinely established. Contacts also include various publics who are likely to embrace points of view and positions that differ from those of the Agency in fundamental ways. Typical of such contacts are representatives of the news media, organized groups desiring to provide input to agency decisions, professional or trade organizations affected by agency programs, and the general public.

The purpose of contacts is to coordinate activities or plans with senior management and program staff, public affairs specialists, specific groups, individuals sharing the same goals and interests, or to advise program staff on techniques to use in disseminating information of a factual nature to the media and specific groups.

**Factor 8 - Physical Demands**

**Level 8-1 (5 points)**

Work is usually performed sitting at a desk, in news conferences, briefings, meetings, etc.; or riding in an automobile or public transportation. There may be occasional brief visits to industrial or construction sites, national parks or forests, military equipment test sites, etc; however, no special physical demands are involved in performing the work.

**Factor 9 - Work Environment**

**Level 9-1 (5 points)**

The work environment involves everyday risks or discomforts requiring normal safety precautions typical of office settings or commercial vehicles such as planes, trains, buses or automobiles. The work area is adequately lighted, heated and ventilated.

**Total Points: 2470**

**GS-11 Grade Range: 2355-2750**